

Ben Franklin: A - Z

Abolitionist

After seeing young African children learning, Ben became an abolitionist, freeing his own slaves and campaigning for the freedom and education of all other slaves.



Bifocal Glasses



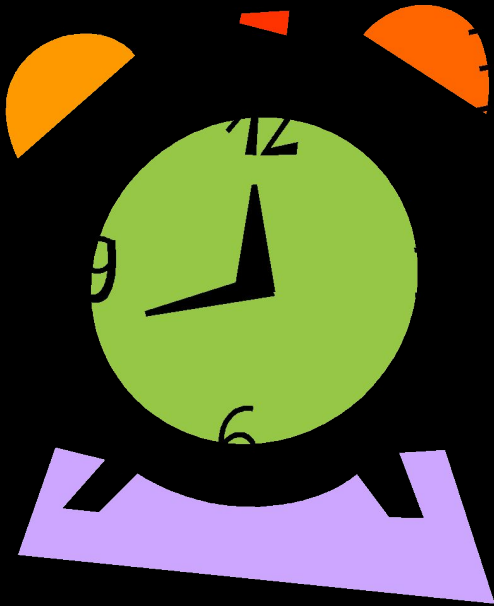
Ben's invention of **bifocal glasses** helped people see both near and far away without needing to switch glasses. He simply combined two lens in one frame.

Continental Congress

At the age of eighty one, Ben was the oldest member of the Continental Congress. This group wrote the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.



Daylight Savings Time



Daylight Savings Time was yet another one of Ben's inventions. It all started as a joke letter to a newspaper under an anonymous name, but the government liked the idea and adopted it!

Exercise

Ben was one of **exercise's** earliest proponents. He believed that regular, rigorous **exercises**, especially outdoors, would prevent disease and make the body healthier.



Firefighters



The first collection of **firefighters** in Philadelphia was Ben's suggestion. The members pledged to help each other put out fires, and the practice quickly spread to other cities.

Gazette

As the publisher of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Ben embraced freedom of expression and different viewpoints. He set the course for modern American news coverage.



Humor

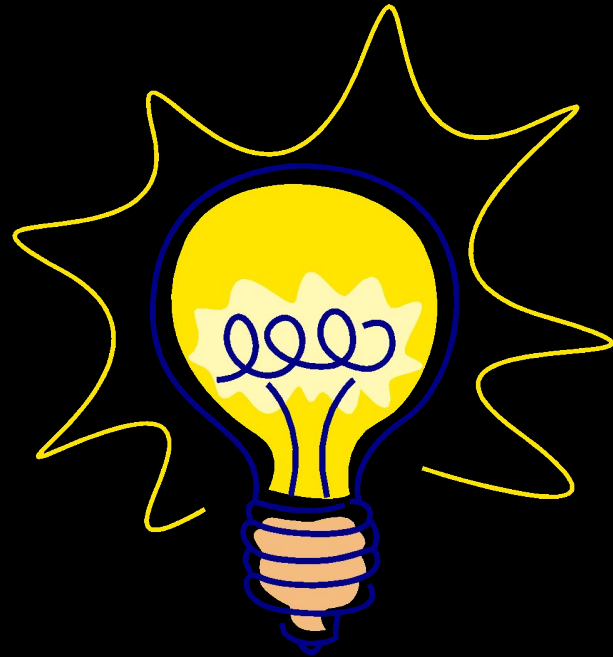


Humor was one of Ben's favorite things. He is often called the "First American Humorist," and loved witty and irreverent jokes. He liked to tell jokes that "made people think."

Inventor

Ben was arguably the greatest **inventor** in all of American history.

He liked to create things that were practical and helped with everyday inconveniences. He also improved already existing things.



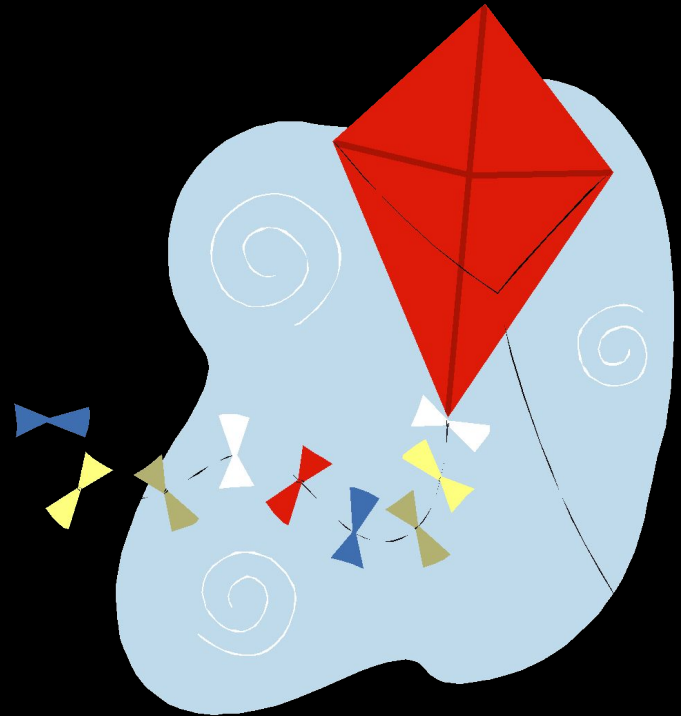
Junto



In 1727, Ben organized a group of men, called **Junto**, who met for deep and engaging discussions. This group eventually grew into the modern American Philosophical Society.

Kite Flying

One of the things Ben is most famous for in people's minds is **kite flying**. He conducted electricity from lightning, through a metal rod in the kite, and down the string to a key in his hand.



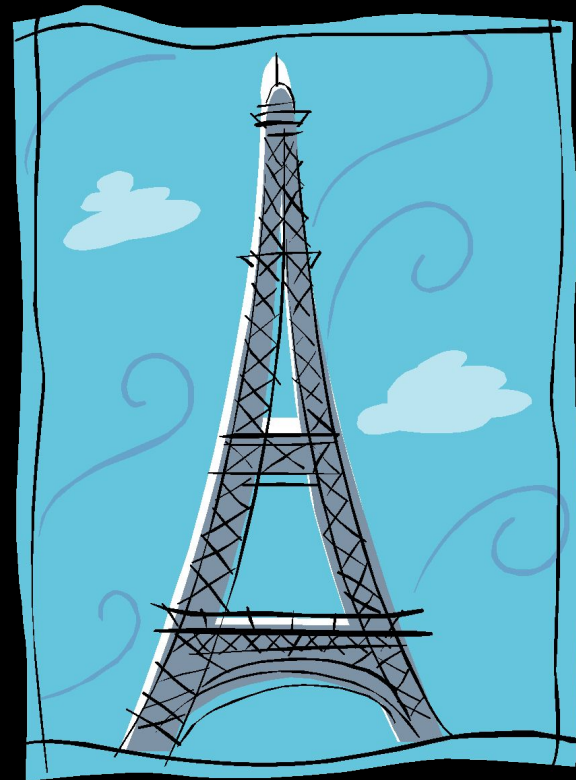
Lightning Rod



Lightning destroyed many homes before Ben invented the **lightning rod**. It channeled the electricity from lightning to the ground. Ben considered this his most important invention.

Minister to France

Ben served as America's first Minister to France. He negotiated peace between the colonies and France, gaining their support. He lived in the country for nine years.



No Meat



When he was young, Ben needed more money to buy the books he loved so much. He decided to save money by eating **no meat**. He also believed that vegetarianism was better for the body.

Odometer

Ben created the first **odometer** to measure distances covered. He used it to track his carriage routes when he delivered mail as the postmaster, so he could try and figure out the best route.



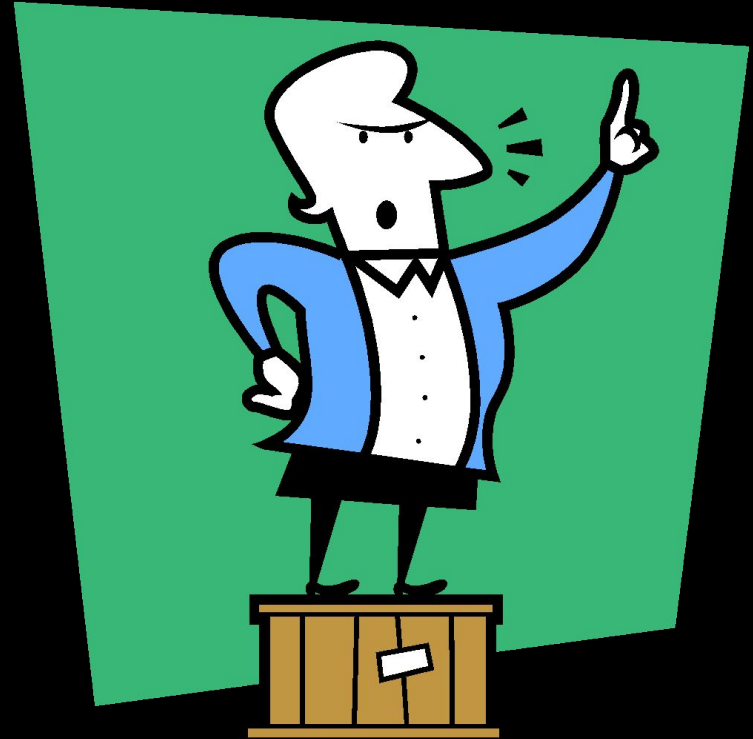
Patent



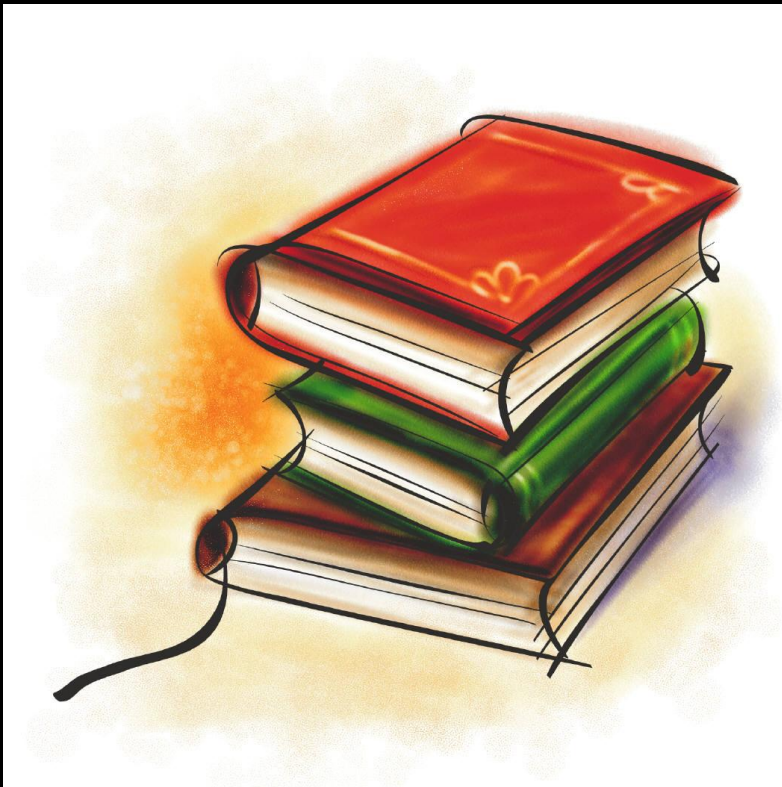
A **patent** wasn't taken out by Ben for any one of his many inventions! He believed that inventors should freely share their creations without trying to make money.

Quotes

In the *Poor Richard's Almanac*, a book Ben put out annually for twenty-six years, he wrote countless witty **quotes** that people still use constantly today.



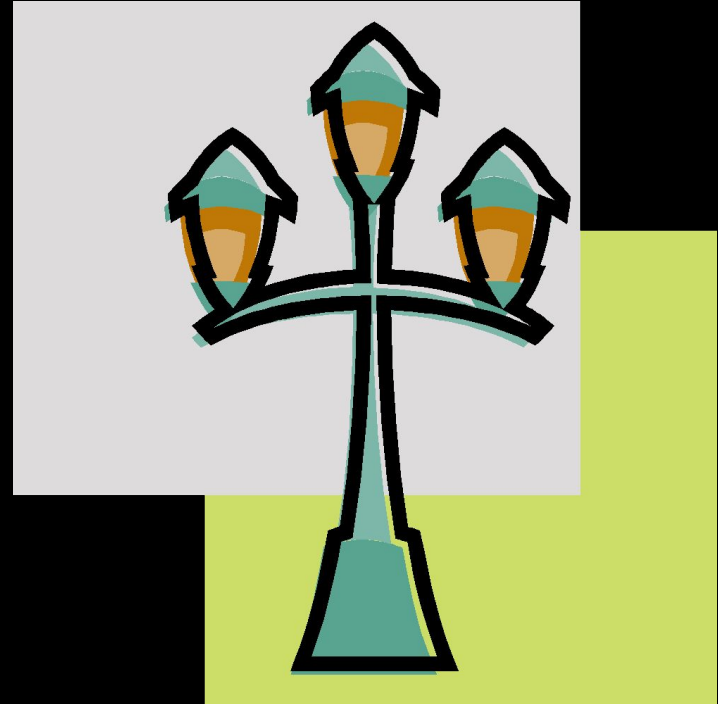
Reading



Reading was one of Ben's greatest pleasures and passions. He had only two years of formal schooling, so he mostly taught himself to read in his brother's printing shop as an apprentice.

Streetlights

Streetlights in Ben's day were dirty and not very bright. He invented an improved version that shone much stronger and didn't have to be cleaned as often.



Three



Ben has the honor of being the only man in history to sign all of America's **three** early documents – the Declaration of Independence, the Treaty of Paris, and the U.S. Constitution.

Underwater

A strong proponent of physical activity, Ben spent a lot of his time **underwater**. He taught himself how to swim, invented the first swim fins, and even became a full-time instructor.



Volunteering



Volunteering was important to Ben. He believed that “People volunteering together in a spirit of cooperation could accomplish great things.”

Writing

Ben loved **writing**, like reading, and also mainly taught himself the ability as an apprentice in the print shop. He liked to write in letters to the local papers under funny pseudonyms.



Extension Arm



Tired of being unable to reach books on the high shelves in the first public library he founded, Ben invented the **extension arm**, which still helps people grab things today.

Young

Ben certainly wasn't **young** when he died! He lived to the age of eighty-four, an amazing accomplishment for his time period. His healthy life style probably made this possible.



Zeal



Ben had a great **zeal** for life that few will ever be able to measure up to. He was a “man of many hats” - a diplomat, politician, inventor, writer, printer, philosopher, doctor, and much, much more!

References

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